

[Memoirs of Early Grayson County]

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FOLKLORE

Grayson Co.

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(Jesse Pipkins Loving)

On our way to Texas from Missouri we heard talk everywhere of two Texas town (this was in 1847), and these two town were Preston, at the border of the ferry and Austin, the new capitol.

I was twelve years old then and much excited at the prospect of catering the magic borders of Texas. We loaded all our stuff on [the?] ferry, which left only room for the horse. The ferryman, on the way over, guessed from my nervous questions that I was rather apprehensive about life in Texas, and told me that if I would take a big drink of Red River water, it would give me courage and cunning, and the fortitude necessary to hold my own in the new state. As soon as I landed on the Texas side, I went down to the [?] bank and drank all I could hold of this miraculous water.

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Around the Preston store we saw about a hundred Indians in their balnkets blankets , moccasins and paint.

We took Coffee Bend road and on top of a rocky, brushy hill we saw the cabin where Joel Earhart lived with his family and dogs. Afterwards Earhart built the first steam mill in Grayson county, on Iron Ore Creek between Sherman and Denison. He ground corn and sawed lumber as well.

We came about twenty miles and about dusk passed two or three housed on a hill. We couldn't rouse a soul in any of them so we rode on and camped at Mormon Grove, so called because some Mormons had camped there once. We traveled on for about fifteen miles and helloed at a house and asked the man who came out, how far was it was to Sherman. 2 He replied that the tree houses we had passed on the hill aboit fifteen miles back was the town of Sherman. This man was Harry Campbell.

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When we reached my Aunt's house I heard her grinding in the titchen kitchen and I said, "Aunt is going to have coffee for supper, but it turned out that she was grinding meal in a steel hand mill then being used generally on the Texas frontier.

One of the first schools in Sherman was taught by a Mr. Taylor and was located on the site of the present Travis Street Methodist Church at the corner of Travis and Mulberry Streets. Another was taught by Carey Land on Montgomery Street at the site of the old Chaffin home. These schools were all pay schools and ran for about three months each year. (This was in 1851)

My father bought the second lot on the south side of [?] Street, west of Crockett in 1851 and I went to Blyth Mills, 125 miles away for the lumber. I brought it back and dumped it

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on the [???] lot and it remained there a year before we got ready to build. There was not a stick of it missing. I was sixteen at this time.

Ben F. DeSpain was another early teacher who taught in Branch, near the sit of the Elliot place. He was one of the first Christian preachers in Grayson county. Mrs. Burroughs P. Smith, who had been Sallie Henderson of Red River county, taught in a little log cabin on college near Broughton.

But the real start of education in Sherman came with the school of Barton T. Taylor, a Methodist preacher. He had a boarding school on the site of the Travis Street Methodist Church at the corner of Travis and Mulberry street. The building was a story and a half high, the upper part being used as a dormitory for the boarding pupils; the lower part as classroom. I entered this school 3 in 1853. There were students attending from all the neighboring towns and also from Indian Territory. There were many half-breed and some full-bloods among the students. Boys and girls both attended. Among the full-blood was Frank Overton who afterwards became governor of the Choctaw nation.

We studied McGuffey's readers, Smith's grammer and Webster's blue back speller. Taylors Taylor' school, though a success educationally, was not renumerative financially, so he sold out in 1855 and went to California.

The next big school was taught by a Yankee in the old [?] Church and Masonic Lodge building, where the opera house now stands at the corner of Travis and Pecan streets. Our seats were logs split in half with holes bored in the ends for the legs. Writing was done on a sperate desk. We usually assembled for classes at about eight in the morning and were dismissed shortly before dusk. We had recess periods during the mornings and afternoons and time off for lunch.

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There were several large plantations along Red River in these early days, growing cotton and corn. Prairie land was regarded as unfit for anything but to grow grass for the cattle. No cotton was grown away from the river bottoms until after the war.

Capt. John T. Roots built a house on South Crockett street in much the same design as his steamboat "Lightest" which piled plied the Red River. The two lions which guarded the entrance were [?] from New Orleans. Towns in Grayson County in 1850

Preston, 20 miles from Sherman, had three stores. It was a very small place.

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Pilot Grove, nicknamed "Licksillet, was about 25 miles from Sherman on the McKinney-Bonham Stage Line. Blueford Clements was the first settle there and operated a small trading post. It always made him fighting mad to hear his place referred to as "Licksillet".

Shawnee-Town, north of the sit of Denison, between Shawnee Creek and the Red River, was another of the early town in the county. Originally this place had been a Shawnee Indian village [??] [Gen?]. [?]. C. Young bought the land on which the town was built and moved down from Red River Country in 1850.

Old Warren, at the edge of Fannin county was still another early town. The forst settler there was John Kitchens. He had a trading house there for several years. He said that when he first went there, the Red River ran close to his house on the bluff but in the course of years it altered its bed, moving half a mile away, leaving a lake where it had formerly [?] the bluff. SOME EARLY SETTLERS

Frank Richards was one of the first merchants of Sherman. His store was on the square at the corner of Travis and Lamar street.

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Abraham Loving had a grocery store and saloon on West [?] Spencer E. Bomar ran a store on South Travis street; Benjamin W. Bradley operated a saloon and grocery on the square at the corner of Lamar and Travis.

The Russell Hotel was on the west side of Travis at [James?] [??] and John Fitch were the proprietors.

Caleb Horn had a saloon called the "Gebastpool". George Stamps had a grocery and saloon called the "Red Front." George [?] served as sheriff, representative and later senator. Sam Gault had operated a wool carding machine. Uncle Jimmy Chafin was the father of seventeen children, eight of them being twins. Uncle Jimmy Jennings ran a farm on the edge of town and was a good farmer. Coonskin Roberts was the well digger in the town. John Shackleford was the town's shoemaker and was a fine story teller. Enoch Wess served as justice of the peace and was the leading singer in the town. Solomon Bostwich served as county clerk for many years. Newton made rawhide bottom chairs. Uncle Billie Coffee was county treasurer for several terms. Phillip Wells was a merchant. Uncle Jimmie Southward was a Methodist preacher. Dr. B. L. Bullock was the town's physician and was the father of the first child born in Sherman. It was called Billie and nicknamed Buster. Dr. John Brooks was a druggist at the corner of the square and was postmaster for a long time. He was an ingenious little Englishman. When anyone called for something he did not have in stock, he would tell them to come back the next day and he set about to manufacture it for them.

Other names of early settlers were Andrew McElroy, Uncle Milliard Jennings, High F. Young, Sam Maxey, George Bond, Wesley [Lone?] and his brother Lannie, and Old Brother Procter. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Unpublished autobiography of Jesse Pipkin Loving, for many years county clerk of Grayson county. [?] is in possession of Mrs. W.H. Lucas, Historian for Grayson County, Sherman, Tex.